

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend Claim 1, as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A sheet feeding apparatus comprising:
  - a sheet supporting portion on which a sheet is placed;
  - a feeding member configured to feed out the sheet placed on said sheet supporting portion;
  - a cover having a guide member configured to guide an upper surface of the sheet fed out by said feeding member and form a feeding path;
  - a regulating portion which is configured to regulate a leading edge of the sheet placed on said sheet supporting portion, ~~which~~ and which protrudes downwardly from the guide member into the feeding path and is movably mounted on the cover, ~~and which is configured to move relative to the cover in a retracting direction from the feeding path in association with the opening operation of the cover;~~ and
  - an interlocking mechanism configured to interlock the regulating portion with an opening operation of the cover so that said regulating portion is ~~moved relative to the cover in a retracting direction~~ upwardly retracted above the guide member from the feeding path in association with the opening operation of the cover.

2. (Previously Presented) A sheet feeding apparatus according to Claim 16, wherein said regulating portion comprises a regulating member and a link member connected between said holding member and said regulating member, said link member being moved by said holding member to move said regulating member, and

wherein said link member comprises a first link member movable in operative association with the movement of said holding member, and a second link member movable in operative association with the movement of said first link member to thereby move said regulating member to said regulating position or said retracted position, and

wherein said first link member or said holding member is provided with a cam shape, and an amount of movement of said regulating member moved through the intermediary of said second link member in accordance with the amount of movement of said holding member is varied by said cam shape.

3. (Previously Presented) A sheet feeding apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein said cam shape is such a shape that  $H > h$ , where  $H$  is the amount of movement of said regulating member until said feeding member protrudes downwardly from said guide member through said holding member when said feeding member feeds out the sheet, and  $h$  is the amount of movement of said regulating member after said feeding member has protruded downwardly from said guide member.

4. and 5. (Canceled)

6. (Previously Presented) A sheet feeding apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein said guide member is provided above said sheet supporting portion and below said feeding member located at said feeding stop position, and

wherein said cam shape is such a shape that  $H > h$ , where  $H$  is the amount of movement of said regulating member until said feeding member protrudes downwardly

from said guide member through said holding member, and  $h$  is the amount of movement of said regulating member after said feeding member has protruded downwardly from said guide member.

7. (Previously Presented) A sheet feeding apparatus according to Claim 6, wherein said first link member and said second link member are movably mounted on said cover, and with an opening operation of said cover, said regulating member is moved to said retracted position together with said second link member.

8. (Previously Presented) A sheet feeding apparatus according to Claim 7, wherein said second link member is provided with a restraining portion for restraining said holding member to thereby regulate the downward movement of said holding member when said cover is opened.

9. (Previously Presented) A sheet feeding apparatus according to Claim 7, wherein said cover opens said separating portion.

10. (Previously Presented) An image forming apparatus comprising:  
an image reading apparatus as recited in Claim 15; and  
an image forming portion for forming an image on the basis of image information read by said image reading apparatus.

11. (Previously Presented) A sheet feeding apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein said link member or said holding member is provided with a second cam shape,

wherein said guide member is provided above said original supporting portion and below a position of said feeding member when said holding member is located at said feeding stop position, and

wherein said second cam shape is such a shape that an amount of movement of said regulating member with respect to an amount of movement of said holding member until said feeding member is protruded downwardly from said guide member when said feeding member feeds out the original is larger than an amount of movement of said regulating member with respect to an amount of movement of said holding member after said feeding member is protruded downwardly from said guide member.

12. (Previously Presented) A sheet feeding apparatus according to Claim 2, wherein said holding member and said regulating member are provided on said cover, and

wherein said holding member is moved with respect to said cover in association with the opening operation of said cover so that relative positions of said cover and said holding member are changed, and said link member acts on said cover so that said regulating member is moved to said retracted position by a movement of the holding member with respect to said cover in association with the opening operation of said cover.

13. and 14. (Canceled)

15. (Previously Presented) An image reading apparatus comprising:  
an image reading unit to read an image of an original; and

a sheet feeding apparatus as set forth in Claim 1, wherein said image reading unit reads the image of the original fed by said sheet feeding apparatus.

16. (Previously Presented) A sheet feeding apparatus according to Claim 1, further comprising:

a separating portion configured to separate the sheet fed out by the feeding member and to feed additional sheets stacked on the sheet supporting portion one by one,

wherein the regulating portion is movable between a regulating position, in which said regulating portion regulates movement of the sheet between said sheet supporting portion and said separating portion, and a retracted position in which said regulating portion does not hamper the feeding of the sheet,

wherein the interlocking mechanism has a holding member configured to hold the feeding member for rotation, said holding member being movable between a feeding position in which said feeding member is in contact with the sheet supported by the sheet supporting portion and a feeding stop position in which said feeding member is out of contact with the sheet,

wherein when said holding member moves from the feeding stop position to the feeding position, said holding member moves said regulating portion from the regulating position to the retracted position, and

wherein when said cover is opened, said regulating portion mounted on the cover is brought into contact with said holding member so that said regulating portion is moved from the regulating position with respect to said cover.

17. (Previously Presented) A sheet feeding apparatus according to Claim 1, wherein with the opening operation of the cover, said regulating portion is moved away from the sheet supporting portion together with the cover, and the position of the regulating portion relative to the cover is changed by the interlocking mechanism so that the regulating portion is further moved away from the sheet supporting portion.